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# Physiotherapy UK 2018

## Submission type

Research

## Topic

2a Primary care and workforce transformation - Qualitative

## How the work fits with the conference theme you have chosen

Reflective practice is a learning activity that is used for ongoing staff development for physiotherapists. Therefore, the understanding of its use for formal Continuing Professional Development purposes is important to subsequently provide and enhance learning opportunities using this concept.

## Title

**Reflective practice as part of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports and Exercise Medicine CPD pathway: UK physiotherapists' experiences**

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## Purpose

Reflective practice (RP) is increasingly used as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity to demonstrate competence and evolving practice as a requirement for continued registration with regulatory bodies. Despite the benefits of RP to facilitate critical thinking, understanding and engaging with new ideas, literature has raised concerns about physiotherapists' understanding and use of this concept for formal CPD purposes. Therefore, the aim of this research was to explore UK physiotherapists' experiences in using RP as part of their Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports and Exercise Medicine (ACPSEM) CPD pathway application.

## Methods

This qualitative research used an interpretative phenomenological approach with semi-structured, one-to-one telephone interviews of three physiotherapists awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold accreditation by the ACPSEM. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using an interpretative six-step process to generate themes.

## Results

The inclusion of RP in the CPD pathway was perceived as a motivator to engage more frequently with this activity and improve the quality of RP. The importance of a mentor as guidance was highlighted to be critical to enhance RP skills throughout the career.

Templates offered valuable structure for RP. However, they might limit RP, when a better understanding of the concept was developed.

Participants acknowledged the importance of RP as a CPD tool to evaluate their practice, and that using this resulted in changing perspective and even patient outcome. However, there was uncertainty of which RP model to choose, what RP to include as part of the CPD pathway and how this information was assessed to demonstrate a certain standard of practice.

### **Conclusion**

This small study showed that RP as part of CPD pathway was a motivator to engage with the concept and developed understanding and skills essential to undertake it successfully, especially when supported by a mentor. Templates enabled RP to be structured, although there was some uncertainty about what was being assessed. Further research could consider other pathways that include RP to gain a broader understanding of its use as part of formal CPD pathways.

### **Implications**

The research findings contribute to the understanding of what it means using RP as part of a formal CPD pathway for physiotherapists. Including RP as an activity for ongoing staff development will allow physiotherapists to become more familiar with the concept and develop better understanding of its use when guided by mentors. However, transparency of assessment criteria of RP as part of a CPD pathway requires more consideration.

### **Key words**

1. Reflective practice
2. Continuing Professional Development
3. Continuing Professional Development pathway

### **Funding acknowledgements** (max. 100 words)

No funding.

### **Ethics approval:**

This research was approved by the School of Health Sciences Ethics and Governance Committee of University of Brighton on 1 April 2015.